

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided, for the acknowledgment of Applicants' Information Disclosure Statements (IDS) by return of the Form PTO-1449. Applicants note that on line 10 of the PTOL-326 form, the Examiner did not acknowledge whether Applicants' drawings filed on July 22, 2003 were accepted or objected to, and respectfully requests the acknowledgement of the same in the next official communication. Applicants further note that the Examiner did not acknowledge Applicants' Claim for Priority or Receipt of the certified copy of the priority documents, all of which were filed on July 22, 2003, and respectfully request the acknowledgement of the same in the next official communication in the Official Action.

Upon entry of the present amendment, claims 1, 7, 9, 11, 14, 20 will have been amended and claims 2 – 6, 13 will have been canceled. Claims 1, 7-12 and 14-34 remain pending in the present application, with claims 21-34 standing allowed.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's indication of the allowability of claims 6-12 and 14-20. In this regard, Applicants note that independent claim 1 is rewritten to substantially include the limitations set forth in dependent claim 4 and allowable dependent claim 6. Applicants further note that allowable dependent claim 7 is rewritten into independent form and to substantially include the limitations set forth in independent claim 1 and the limitations set forth in dependent claim 4, and claims 2-6 and 13 have been canceled. Applicants further note that claims 9 and 11 have been amended to merely change dependency to the amended independent claim 1.

The Examiner has rejected claims 14-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, finding that the limitation "said engagement hole" lacks antecedent basis, and finding that claim 20 should depend from claim 17 (rather than from claim 16). By the present amendment, Applicants have amended independent claim 14 to recite ---the engagement hole---, rather than "said engagement hole" thereby obviating the Examiner's rejection<sup>1</sup>. Further, although Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, in that one skilled in the art would readily understand what the elements purportedly lacking antecedent basis are, Applicants have amended these claims solely to expedite the patent application process. It is thus respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 14-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

The Examiner has rejected claim 1-3, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e) as being anticipated by Iddan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,632,171). As discussed above and solely in order to advance the prosecution of the present application, Applicants have canceled rejected claims 2, 3 and 13 and (as discussed above) have amended independent claim 1 to substantially incorporate the limitations of dependent claim 4 and allowable claim 6, which should not be taken as an acquiescence by Applicants as to the appropriateness of the rejection, further, Applicants expressly reserve the right to submit claims of a related scope in another application. Thus, the cancellation of the claims in the present application is without prejudice.

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<sup>1</sup> This amendment was made based upon a conversation with Examiner Beverly M. Flanagan on June 14, 2005 in which the Examiner indicated that a change from "said engagement hole" to ---the engagement hole--- in line 10 would overcome the rejection of claim 14.

Absent a disclosure in a single reference of each and every element cited in a claim, a *prima facie* case of anticipation cannot be made under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Since the applied reference fails to disclose each and every element recited in independent claims 1, 7, 14, 21 and 25, these claims, and the claims dependent therefrom, are not anticipated thereby. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of independent claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

The Examiner has rejected claims 4-5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iddan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,632,171) in view of Ueda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,681,260). However, as discussed *supra*, Applicants have canceled these claims and thus respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that each and every pending claim of the present application meets the requirements for patentability under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102, 103, and 112 and respectfully request the Examiner to indicate the allowance of each and every pending claim in the present application.

COMMENTS ON STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR THE INDICATION OF  
ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

In response to the Statement of Reasons for the Indication of Allowable Subject Matter, mailed by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on January 18, 2005, along with the above-noted Official Action, Applicants wish to clarify the record with respect to the basis for patentability of the allowed claims in the present application. In this regard, while Applicants do not disagree with the Examiner's indications that certain identified features are not disclosed by the prior art references, as noted by the Examiner, Applicants further wish to clarify that each of the independent claims in the present application recites a particular combination of features, and the basis for patentability of each of these claims is further based on the particular totality of the features recited therein. The dependent claims set forth additional basis for their patentability in accordance with their recited limitations as well as in accordance with the particular limitations of the respective base claims.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the fact that none of the art of record, whether considered alone, or in any proper combination thereof, discloses or suggests the present invention, reconsideration of the Examiner's action and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested and are believed to be appropriate.

Applicants note that this amendment is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance, and with respect to the allowable features incorporated into claims 1 and 7, should not be considered as surrendering equivalents of the territory between this claim prior to the present amendment and the amended claim. Further, no acquiescence as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection is made by the present amendment. All other amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

P23820.A04

Should the Examiner have any questions or comments regarding this Response, or the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,  
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